(b) to (d) Out of (a) above, 6903 acres is under encroachment. All Defence land is placed under the management and custodial responsibility and protection of specific authorities as laid down in the Cantonment Land Administration Rules, 1937 and Rules for the Acquisition, Custody and Relinquishment of Military lands in India (ACR Rules) 1994. Detailed instructions have been issued to all the authorities for ensuring vigilance, detection and prevention of new encroachments as well as removal of existing encroachments under the provisions of Cantonments Act, 1924 and Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971.

Licenees for using Internet

2682. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of licences issued for using Internet in India so far; and

(b) the licences fee payable for use of Internet facilities, by different category of Internet users?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) No licence is required for acessing the internet service nodes. However, a person has to subscribe to Internet service being operated by DOT/VSNL. Number of subscribers of Internet service in India is approximately 20,700.

(b) No licence fee is payable by users.

Deregulation of Cotton Exports

2683. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news item published in the Hindustan Times dated 29th November, 1996 captioned "Cotton exports should be freely permitted" if India wants to generate the necessary investment to improve the existing poor standards of cotton ginning in the country;

(b) whether any survey in this regard was conducted by the Investment Information and Credit Rating Agency of India Limited (ICRA); if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that Government was showing considerable reluctance in deregulating cotton exports, if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps Government have taken so far to increase the production of cotton as well as an export strategy for cotton based products?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government is not aware of any survey having been conducted by the Investment Information and Credit Rating Agency of India (ICRA).

(c) There is no proposal, at present, to change the existing policy governing export of cotton. The policy seeks to balance on the one hand, the interests of the cotton growers so that they can get remunerative prices for their cotton and, on the other, the interests of cotton consuming sectors, in particular the decentralised sector and handloom weavers, so that cotton yarn is available to them at affordable prices.

(d) The Government is implementing an Intensive Cotton Development Programme (ICDP) to boost production of cotton in the cotton growing States. The Cotton Corporation of India Ltd. (CCI) also supplements the efforts of the Government and the States concerned by undertaking extension and developmental activities. Appropriate steps are also taken, including the rough Export Promotion Councils, to encourage export of cotton based products.